Clark, Dorothy.

Gold Rush Fever Hit Wabash Valley Citizens

T. H. Trib-Star 9/17/67.

By DOROTHY CLARK

The Wabash Valley sent its share of adventuresome men to the California Gold Rush in the mid 1850's. Letters from these Forty-Niners were frequently brought in to the local newspapers by family and friends to be published for everyone to read.

Such a letter was brought in by Jesse Lee. Dated Sacramento City, Sept. 5, 1850, it was written by Joseph Hussey, a former Terre Haute resident, and reads: "I have at last arrived at the Sacramento, after a long and wearisome journey. You will, of course, wish to know how we got along across the plains, etc. I must inform you that we got across much better than some of our Vigo friends, some of whom suffered very much, particularly Thomas Parsons and Casto's companies. This is certainly without exception the hardest trip on man and beast that ever was gone through on earth. I might say it is a country which God himself has cursed; I allude to the crossing of the plains and also the Rocky Mts."

. Hussy went on to explain that "I expected to have found the plains like ours at home, covered with grasses, only of better quality, but this is not the case. We didn't get grass sufficient for our teams but for three nights, until we crossed the North Fork of the Platte; the plains are mostly barren, covered with wild sage; after crossing the river we found pasture much better, and it continued to improve until we cam to the Sierra Nevada Mts."

DOROTHY J. CLARK

"In crossing the plains and mountains, the water was very bad, mostly saturated with poisonous matter, such as alkali, etc. From the Platte to Bear River the country is fine, and we enjoyed ourselves very well.

Supplies Were Scarce

"In the crossing of this river we lost our hard bread, sugar and rice, and were compelled to go by Salt Lake City to lay in a supply. We arrived there on the first day of July."

Hussey was very impressed with the Mormon city and enjoyed his week's stay there. He continues in his letter with the following: "We left the city on the 8th; after traveling 30 days we reached the desert, by which time we expected to have got through, having about 240 miles yet to travel. Of all the suffering I have ever seen or heard of I met it there, for I do assure you that there was not one wagon out of 20 but what was out of provision, and a great many out of money also—this was our case.

Flour and bacon were brought in from Sacramento and sold at two dollars per pound, coffee, sugar and rice were the same. After spending all our money we yet had not a sufficiency to take us through, and we sold our wheel horse, which brought us 20 pounds of flour."

I must inform you that men and stock suffered more on this desert than any other part of the route, there being thousands of dollars worth of property destroyed, consisting of wagons, etc. I counted the number of dead horses and mules on this desert and the number was 657. This desert is 45 miles wide. We were two nights and one day getting across."

"I visited the mines on Webber, and also those at Hangtown, and I find that there is no more than one man out of 10 that is getting his ounce per day. While there are hundreds who don't more than pay their board. Hadden and myself will leave in the morning for the Yuba mines and try our luck. T.F. is going to follow his trade; W.F. speaks of mining, but has not decided; Caldwell is also going to mining; Thos. Parsons is mining on Webber's Creek. I have seen W. Booth. He left for the mines this morning. Tuller is with him; Hitchcock is driving team for Kindley; Scott Bump is working in the southern mines, but has done nothing as yet; Capt. Durgee and Leonard Crawford are trading in stock; Jos. Baker is working at his trade, at $16 per day; T. Hook is working at his trade at $12 per day."

Community Affairs File

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

"Sacramento City is the most business place I was ever in according to its population. Boarding is from 16 to 24 dollars per week; beef is 20 to 25 cents per pound; potatoes 50 cents per pound; onions 75 cents; flour from 7 to 10 cents; bacon from 20 to 25 cents per pound. Every tavern in this place is also a coffee house and gambling establishment, in which even the women will make their appearance at night, and they are sometimes the heaviest betters." The letter was signed "Joseph H. Hussey."

Many of the men who left from this area did not return home. In the Terre Haute Journal of Januray, 1851, appeared the death notice of Dr. Azel Holmes "in the 48th year of his age, late of Terre Haute, who died in Sacramento City at the residence of W. E. Chamberlain on Nov. 2, 1850, after an illness of 10 days."

Later in the month of January, 1851, the Journal carried the notice that "Joseph O. Jones, Esq., who went out to California last spring in company with Dr. Holmes returned home on Monday last."

This lucky gentleman later became one of the city's leading citizens and postmaster.

In May, 1851, the editor of the Journal received a letter from Robert M. Malcolm in which he states that ". . . mining is hard work, and the exposure of health to those who follow it is very great. The miners often have to pack their provisions on their backs from one to five miles, over mountain ridges and volcanic rocks; and in many places work in water knee deep, and sometimes deeper; sleep on the ground on the soft side of a board, eat unwholesome food, and drink mineral water —be their own cook and washer woman — and, in short, there are very few who have given it a fair trial, that seemed to relish it very well. The average day's work in mines, so far as my knowledge extends, I would put at two dollars per day. Society in most parts of this country is very poor, drinking, gambling, stealing and robbing are the common avocations of many, and the profane swearing is shocking."

Victims of Disease

"Thousands who arrived here the past year have fallen victims to the diseases of the country, been wrapped in their blankets and buried in a land of strangers. The names of my acquaintances from the Wabash Valley, who have been thus far unfortunate are as follows: Dr. A. Holmes, Terre Haute; Capt. J. Dilley, Mt. Pleasant; James Ray, Sugar Creek; P. O. Wilson, J. W. Wilson and my brother, Wm. Malcom, Palestine, Ill."

Malcom closed his letter with this warning: "My candid opinion is that California will make more widows and orphans than it will rich men. My advice to those of my acquaintances who feel an anxiety to come to California is to stay at home, if they have one, and if they have not, and want one, to go to work there and get it."

To show that there were two sides to the situation, the Journal had the following item in August, 1851: "Lucius A. Booth, Esq., who went out to California two years since from this place, arrived at home on Friday last, by the overland route, in 70 days from Sacramento City . . . We understand that he returns with a good supply of the "product" of California.

And so it goes . . . some widows and orphans, and a few rich men in the Wabash Valley because of the faraway California Gold Rush.

Gold Rush
Fear
The residents

Records Paint Colorful View Of 49ers Westward Trek

Clark, Dorothy
T. H. Trib-Star 7/7/68

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

The news of the discovery of gold in California in 1848 signaled the start of the first gold rush in the history of the world. By 1850 almost 100,000 poured into the new territory and almost all these new settlers were men.

Most of the Forty-niners were young and unmarried, or had left wife and family at home. Most of these adventurers had no intention of staying in California longer than the few months in which they planned to make their "Pile."

They expected to dig enough gold to pay off the mortgage on the farm at home, or to buy a new farm, or to start in business for themselves, etc. Few were able to do this, and many returned home no wealthier than when they had started.

DOROTHY J. CLARK

In the years that followed there were to be other gold rushes; to Pike's Peak in 1859, to Montana in the sixties, and to the Klondike in the nineties.

Many times a group of men from one locality would band together and pool their resources to pay for tools, supplies and transportation to hunt for gold in the Far West.

Even on the well-traveled trails there were many hardships, and the routes were soon marked by broken wagons, dead oxen and mules and lonely graves.

Nuggets Like Hens' Teeth

The stories that came out of California as to the richness of the gold deposits were usually exaggerations. There were no nuggets lying around like hen's eggs waiting to be picked up, and no streams were paved with gold.

Most of the men who came to look for wealth would have earned more staying on the farm back home. But strikes were sometimes made that were almost as remarkable as the stories told back East.

A few years back, after the death of former State Bee Inspector John Beauchamp at the age of 86 years, an interesting document was found among his family papers and brought to my attention. Dated March 1, 1849, this yellowed paper told of the farm auction of J. L. Moss, of Versailles, Kentucky. This ancestor of the deceased had sold his farm and was leaving by ox team for California and Oregon territory.

Sale Items Numerous

All his personal property was listed for sale in this manner: "All my ox teams, except two teams Buck and Ben and Tom and Jerry which I will drive west . . . two milk cows . . . two oxen yokes . . . two ox carts . . . plow with wooden mould board . . . 1,500 ten-foot fence rails . . . 85 sugar troughs made of white ash timber . . . two spinning wheels . . . one large loom, made by Jerry Wilson . . . one hundred split hoops . . .

"One 32 gallon barrel of Johnson Miller whiskey, seven years old . . . twenty gallon apple brandy . . . some oak-tanned leather . . . one dozen wooden pitch forks . . . one 32-caliber rifle made by Benjamin Miller . . . several hams, sides of bacon and ten gallons of lard . . . six Fox Hounds, all soft-mouthed except one . . . one gray mare and colt . . . one baby yoke . . . lot of poplar weather boards . . . 800 to 1,000 feet of clapboards . . . one 60-gallon soap kettle . . . ten gallons maple syrup . . . 40 gallon sorghum molasses . . . 20 pounds mutton tallow . . . 300 poles . . . 100 empty barrels . . . one 40-gallon copper still . . . 50 gallon soft soap . . . three scythes and cradles . . . one half interest in tanyard.

"At the same time I will sell my six Negro slaves, two men 39 and 58 years old, two boys, 12 and 18 years old, two Mulatto wenches, 32 and 40 years old . . . will sell alltogether to same person as I will not separate them.

"Terms of the sale: cash in hand, or note to draw four per cent interest with Henry McConnell as security . . . the sale was to start at eight o'clock, with plenty of free eats and drinks all during the sale."

As interesting as old family papers are, they can be very frustrating also. The question comes to mind: After the sale, did this Mr. Moss make it safely to the Far West, did he strike it rich, did he stay there or did he return to Kentucky or Indiana where his descandants were to live their lives?

Nearly every family has someone who left the family rooftree, so to speak, and journeyed off to the gold rushes, to seek greener pastures, or just to see the country. Some returned, some didn't, and that's what makes genealogy such a difficult task in locating these little-known branches of the family tree.

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Community Affairs File

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Historically Speaking

Gold tales often ended up with forming of new towns

Valley IT s NOV 2 9 1981

By DOROTHY CLARK
Tribune-Star Writer

(Editor's Note: The author is indebted to Donald Keller for this account of J. M. Shively and his experiences during the California gold rush. Keller's relative on his mother's side of the family, Shively left the Louisville area to go to Astoria, Ore., where he became postmaster.)

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From 1843 until 1848, Oregon settled rapidly. It was seed time when news of the gold strike reached Astoria. Every able-bodied man left his plough and harness standing in the mud furrow.

Saddling his horse, he bade farewell to his wife and family and set off to find his fortune in gold.

Tales of filling a quart cup daily with gold found with only a pick and shovel and a common milk pan were tempting, but Shively remained at his postmaster's job. Winter came on, and a ship arrived with returning miners, all bearing long bags of gold like a hunter wears his powder horn.

Making camp on the beach in the brush, they threw down their bags of gold, camp kettles and blankets, and went in to see the sights of the town.

Stormy weather kept them there for a week as no steamboats could go upriver. Shively expected trouble (he was also Astoria's justice of the peace), but there was not a single incident of theft during the miners' stay in town.

Shively had saved $800 intending to purchase a small steam engine and build a small river steamer. He arrived at San Francisco only to find the engine had been shipped to Sacramento. Arriving there he was told the price was $30,000.

So, Shively went up to the mines and soon had a long leather bag of gold for himself. He bought goods in Sacramento, chartered a vessel and started for Astoria. Out of water and provisions, he attempted to land at the mouth of the Rogue River, wrecked his boat and lost all his possessions.

Stating that all mining camps were alike, Shively told of working first in a camp not far from the spot where gold was first discovered. Here he made about $20 a day.

One day a prospector came to the camp and told of diggings where a man could make $100 a day and lie in the shade during the heat of the day. He showed a gold nugget as large as a goose egg to prove his statement.

That convinced the excited men and off they went to the new diggings. They found only a few mines and a whisky shop, and they went to work. Miners crowded in daily. Soon a trader arrived with flour and a smoked pig. Next came a blacksmith, a score of gamblers and a Baptist preacher.

The mines were indeed very rich, according to Shively, and miners of all nationalities arrived daily. The whisky man built a brush shanty under a cedar tree. The man with the flour and pig set up a tent. The blacksmith set up under a huge sugar pine tree and the gamblers built a log hut. A town was born.

On Sundays, the miners got their picks sharpened. Many went to see the fights, and some gambled away their week's work. As the day of rest wore on, taking a nip became a drunken spree, and fist fights turned to shoot-outs. Some miners washed their clothes, while a few gathered around the preacher to hear him read from the Bible.

A year later the scene had changed. The Oregon men had skimmed off the easy gold from the mines. Dreading to go home as beggars, some blew their brains out, while others stole horses to get home. They were shot or hung as horse thieves.

The more solid men hired out to those who had paying claims and earned enough money to get to the coast where they engaged in some more long-range profitable business other than gold mining.

According to Shively, "When I came to Oregon the second time, I came under the auspices of the government. I had a team of four mules, so I came to a camp where it was 50 miles to the water. A three gallon keg was all the water we could carry. We discussed the situation and the mules understood us, for they started in a rush and never let up until they reached water."

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This writer is always interested in hearing from those who have interesting family accounts of their ancestors' participation in local, state or national history.

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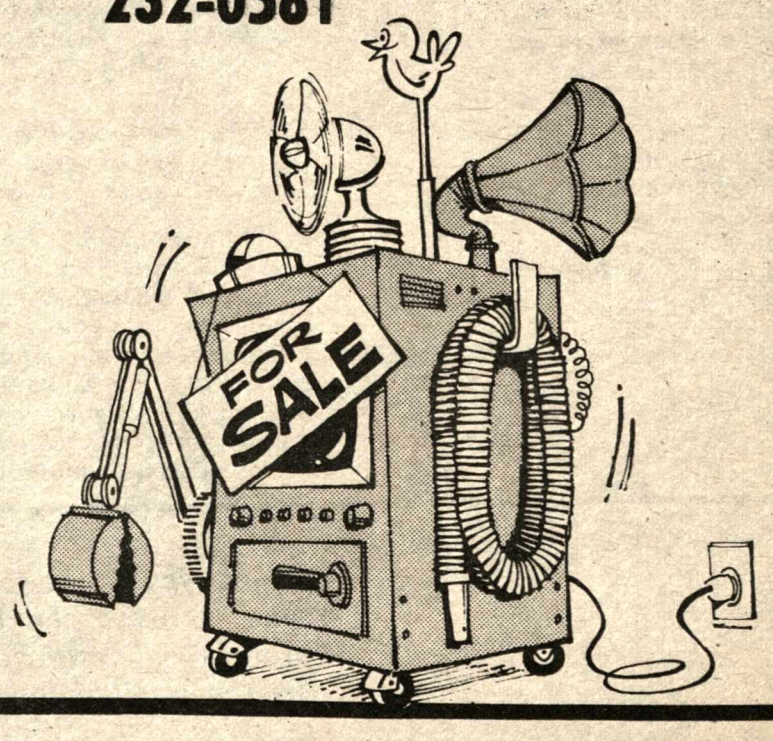


Vigo County Public Library

BETWEEN THE LINES

THE STORY BEHIND THE STORIES YOU READ ABOUT CELEBRITIES

By Josie

Q. *I read a brief clip about Nancy Reagan buying a poster of someone and being pretty excited about it. What was it, an old poster of one of Ronnie's movies? C. Ravikoff, Silver Spring, Md.*

A. Believe it or not, it was a pin-up of Catherine Bach, who plays Daisy Duke on "The Dukes of Hazzard." It seems that a former elementary school teacher of Bach's now works in the White House, so when Bach's poster was issued, she shipped it post-haste to her friend. The teacher loyally put it on the wall, where it was seen by the First Lady who demanded to know where she could get a copy. That may be a clue to the prez's TV tastes...

Q. *Margot Fonteyn was my favorite ballerina, but you don't hear anything about her anymore. What's she doing? L. Jacobs, Cambridge, Mass.*

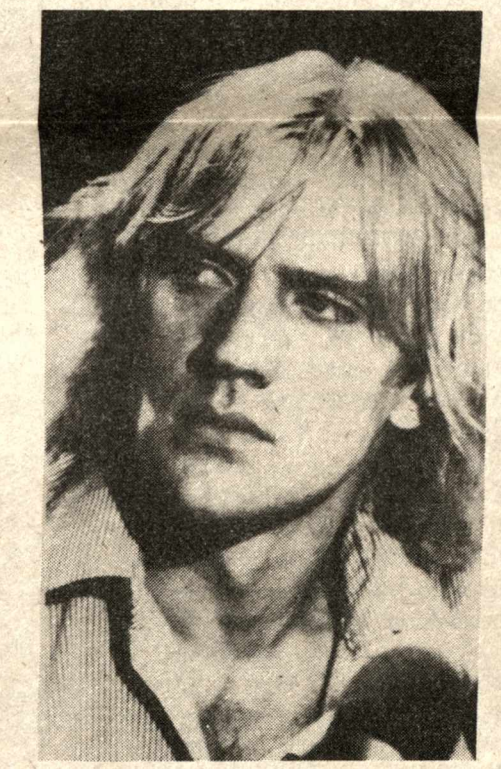
A. Would you believe raising cows? She and her husband of 20 years, Roberto de Arias, are living a quiet life on a rented ranch 20 miles from Panama City, with a herd of cows. She has three favorites named Plutarch, Agamemnon and Lysistrata.) Occasionally, she does put in a public appearance, usually to raise money for the Panama ballet.

Q. *I think British actor David Warner ("Time Bandits") is very sexy, even though he usually plays evil roles. Is he married? A. Wallace, Rocklin, Calif.*

A. Yes, just married. He married longtime lover Sheilah Kent, a former secretary to flamboyant producer Allan Carr, in London about two months ago. They were attended by a newborn little Warner.

Q. *I went to see the play "The Seven Year Itch" starring Cybill Shepherd, but when I got to the theatre, no Cybill and no explanation. Did she walk out on the show or what? J. Hansen, Houston, Tex.*

A. No, she and co-star Joey Bishop just didn't get along and she was given walking papers. The two had battled throughout the play's six-week stint in Dallas, and when they got to Houston, Cybill figured she'd had it and gave the producers two weeks notice. They gave her one week to leave instead, and the following week imported long-time "starlet" Linda Kaye Henning ("Petticoat Junction") from Hollywood to fill in. But Cybill isn't hurting. She's writing a screenplay and trying to buy the movie rights to a novel, "September, September," that she thinks would be perfect for her. But will she ask her former lover, director Peter Bogdanovich, the man who both discovered and buried her in films, for help? If she does, he's willing. "She took the fall for me," says Bogdanovich. "I screwed up a couple of pictures, but she just did what I told her."



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Q. *I keep seeing pictures of Jacqueline Bisset with dancer Alexander Godunov, but she seems awfully coy about talking romance. What's going on? Denise F., Sherman Oaks, Calif.*

A. She does seem to have a good time issuing denials, but if she won't talk about it, her father will. According to Dr. Max Bisset, "Yes, Jackie likes that man a lot," which after translating from British reserve, means things are pretty hot. He doesn't think the two will marry, however — expecially since Godunov is still, technically, married to a wife who lives in Russia. In fact, Jackie's dad doesn't think his offspring will marry at all. But he also doesn't think she'll ever be alone. "She's far too attractive and too lively to ever be without a gentleman in her life," he says.

Q. *My husband and I were wondering if that is really Season Hubley in the movie "Hardcore." Why would she play such a raunchy part? T. Hull. Decatur, Ill.*

A. If you thought that was something, you should have caught her snarling cameo in the film "Escape from New York," starring her husband, Kurt Russell. She seems to have a liking for unsavory roles that off-set her all-American looks.

Q. *I know "Rich and Famous" is a remake of the "Old Acquaintance" film with Bette Davis and Miriam Hopkins. I loved the original and hated the remake. What's the next great film to be destroyed by dumb Hollywood producers? J. Crews, San Antonio, Tex.*

A. Hang onto your popcorn, because a remake of one of the all-time great weeper films is now in the works. "Now, Voyager" another Bette Davis great, will get an update with Billy Dee Williams and Jaclyn Smith. They're even planning to duplicate the cigarette lighting scene, which will make at least one sector of the population happy — the tobacco industry. Cigarette sales skyrocketed after the release of the first film, and the industry no doubt hopes the second will have the same effect.

Anything you'd like to know about prominent personalities? Write: "Between the Lines," Terre Haute Tribune-Star, 721 Wabash Ave., Terre Haute, Ind., 47808. We regret we cannot answer any letters individually.

Vigo County Public Library Community Affairs File

Dear diary: Today I traveled west

Ts JUN 19 1988

Clark, Dorothy

Historically speaking

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column for 30 years. She is Vigo County Historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

Those of us who have made the trip from Indiana to California in a jet plane can scarcely comprehend the hardships, physical endurance and dangers encountered by men who traveled from the Hoosier state to the West Coast seeking gold.

A Sullivan County man, Edward F. Morgan, kept a day journal beginning April 13, 1859, when he left his home in Curreysville. "Crost Illinois and landed at St. Lewis the 29 day of April. Left there the 30 and went up to Levensworth on a steam boat. Landed at L. on May 3 . . . went out to Salt Crick 4 miles west of town and laid up until the 6th . . . was 100 miles from home.

"Started across the plains the 6th and crossed the Big Blue River the 15 . . . distance from L. 115 miles. I traveled on and passed Fort Kearney May 29 . . . struck the South Plat river and traveled on up 165 miles to the crossing then crosted over at Ash Hollow and struck the North Plat on June 10."

Some of the landmarks he mentioned are still in existence today, places like Chimley (Chimney) Rock, Folsom, northeast of Sacremento, but some of the places cannot be found on a modern map.

In September he reached Hangtown, which he noted was 2,650 miles from Curreysville, and started to work a claim in the American River valley.

He lived on beans and bread until April 1860 when he hired out to someone else to make money to buy equipment. As soon as he had enough saved, he went back to his own claim, but reported "nothing but hardship through 1861 and 1862." At least he was avoiding service in the Civil War.

At intervals he would take little side trips to Placerville and Vallejo for supplies and a break from nothing but hard work.

During this period in his life he must have been depressed at times for he wrote a poem titled "Despair." High points in his life were letters from home. In May 1863, he "bought a new pistol for 15 dollars."

Clippings from the "Sacremento Daily Union" pasted in his journal gave news of the Civil War and the entire text of Lincoln's freedom proclamation. He also pasted clippings sent from home by his father.

"For weeks after the attack on Fort Sumter, the traitors of Sullivan kept a secession flag flying from a tall pole in full sight of every passing train. It has been a notorious and disgusting hole of treason . . . Sullivan is and has been a nest of the most violent rebel sympathizers. Union men have been lynched there."

It was about this time that a train accident occurred at Sullivan causing the death of Professor Fletcher. The intended victim was Indiana Gov. Oliver P. Morton who was believed to be on the train.

During 1864 and 1865 Morgan mined successfully, made a great deal of money, and in June 1866 "got ready to start home."

After seeing the sights in Frisco, he left on the steamer Constitution and passed through the Golden Gate beginning the long sea voyage home. He told of seeing whales, flying fish, and porpoise. In Acapulco, Panama, and some of the islands, he bought souvenirs.

On July 1 he "crost the istmis on the cars . . . got aboard the steamer New York . . . saw some 'Peruvian pirates' near the Bahamas . . . saw several schooners crossing the Gulf stream." Heading up the Atlantic coast he landed at New York where he saw some more sights.

On July 10 he "left New York and crost over to Jersey city and got on cars for Cinti . . . past through about 60 towns and arrived at Pittsburgh at 2 o'clock in the night. On the 11th I arrived at Cin-ti at 4 o'clock . . . stayed 12, 13 and 14th, left on cars for home . . . got home the 16th and found the folks all well."

One of the last entries in the journal is dated Sunday, 29 July, 1866, "having nice times, several parties, etc. . . . went to Sullivan and Terre Haute (only he spelled it Tere hoat) several times." Following an absence of over seven years, this young man was happy to be home again.

A Sullivan County history of 1884 listed Morgan as a farmer at Shelburn. Born in 1837 in Cleaves, Ohio, he came with his parents to Sullivan in 1852.

The book tells how "in 1859 he went to California and mined in Sacremento county four years; then went to Nevada and mined 2½ years; then through Oregon and finally to Colorado, locating at Austin, where he owned interest in several rich mines. The Morgan-Muncy Mine at one time was considered to be worth over $500,000, as that sum was refused from W. H. Vanderbilt, but the mine was afterward sold for $60,000 . . . He was married in Sullivan county on March 4, 1874, to Miss Maggie McCoskey . . . and by this union Mr. Morgan had three children, Estella, Mirtie and Katie (as of 1884)."

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Weary trek westward

Promise of fortune attracted many to California

IS JUN 24 1990

Historically speaking

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By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

In the mid-1850s, the Wabash Valley sent its share of adventuresome men to the Gold Rush in California. Letters from the forty-niners were brought in to the local newspapers by families and friends to be published for everyone to read.

Jesse Lee brought in a letter dated Sept. 5, 1850, from Joseph Hussey, a former Terre Haute resident. "I have at last arrived at Sacramento," he wrote, "after a long and wearisome journey . . . I must inform you that we got across (the Plains) much better than some of our Vigo friends, some of whom suffered very much, particularly Thomas Parsons and Casto's companies."

Hussey believed it to be the hardest trip on man and beast without exception. He told how bad the water was, most saturated with alkali, but from the Platte to the Bear River, the country was fine and they enjoyed themselves.

"In the crossing of this river we lost our hard bread, sugar and rice, and were compelled to go by Salt Lake City to lay in a supply," he explained. They arrived there July 1.

Hussey was impressed with the Mormon city and enjoyed his week's stay there. His letter continues: "We left the city on the 8th, after traveling 30 days we reached the desert, by which time we expected to have got through, having about 240 miles yet to travel.

"Of all the suffering I have ever seen or heard of, I met it there, for I do assure you that there was not one wagon out of 20 but what was out of provision, and a great many out of money also. This was our case.

"Flour and bacon were brought in from Sacramento and sold at $2 a pound; coffee, sugar and rice were the same. After spending all our money, we yet had not a sufficiency to take us, and we sold our wheel horse, which brought us 20 pounds of flour."

Going through the desert, Hussey counted 657 dead horses and mules, and thousands of dollars worth of wagons destroyed during the 45-mile trek. They were two nights and a day getting across.

Hussey visited the mines at Webber, and also those at Hangtown, and he found that no more than one man out of 10 was getting his ounce per day. Hundreds of men couldn't pay their board.

Hussey and Hadden left for the Yuba mines to try their luck. His traveling companions were T.F., who was going to follow his trade; W.F., who couldn't decide; Caldwell, who was going to mining; and Parsons who was mining on Webber's Creek.

He reported that W. Booth left for the mines with Tuller. Hitchcock was driving a team for Kindley; Scott Bump was working in the southern mines; Capt. Durgee and Leonard Crawford were trading in stock; Joseph Baker was working in his trade making $16 per day; and T. Hook was working at his trade for $12 per day.

According to Hussey, "Sacramento City is the most business place I was ever in according to its population. Boarding is from $16 to $24 per week; beef is 20 to 25 cents per pound; potatoes 50 cents; onions 75 cents; flour from 7 to 10 cents; bacon from 20 to 25 cents per pound.

"Every tavern in this place is also a coffee house and gambling establishment, in which even women will make their appearance at night, and they are sometimes the heaviest betters." The letter was signed: "Joseph H. Hussey."

Many of the forty-niners from this area did not return home. Their obituaries appeared in the local newspapers. Dr. Azel Holmes, age 45, died in 1850 after an illness of 10 days.

Joseph O. Jones, who went to California with him, returned home in 1851. He became Terre Haute's postmaster.

The editor received a letter from Robert M. Malcolm which stated that "mining is hard work, and the exposure of health to those who follow it is very great." He told how the miners packed their provisions on their backs, hiking up to five miles over mountain ridges and volcanic rocks, in many places working in water knee deep, sleeping on the ground, eating unwholesome food, and drinking mineral water. They had to be their own cook and washer.

In short, there were very few who even gave it a fair trial. He estimated the average day's work was $2 per day. Society was very poor, drinking, gambling, stealing and robbing were common avocations, and the profane swearing was shocking.

According to Malcolm, "Thousands who arrived here the past year have fallen victim to the diseases of the country, been wrapped in their blanket and buried in a land of strangers."

He named some of his unfortunate friends — Dr. Holmes of Terre Haute; Capt. J. Dilley, Mt. Pleasant; James Ray, Sguar Creek; P.O. Wilson, J.W. Wilson, and my brother, William Malcolm, Palestine, Ill.

Malcolm's candid opinion was that California would make more widows and orphans than it would rich men. He advised them to stay at home.

On the other hand, the editor stated in August 1851 that "Lucius A. Booth, Esq., who went out to California two years since from this place, arrived at home on Friday last, in 70 days from Sacramento City . . . We understand that he returns with a good supply of the 'product' of California."

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Gold lured residents from Valley

Ts MAY 16 1993

Clark, Dorothy

Historically speaking

Clark retired as the Tribune-Star's women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column since 1956. She is Vigo County historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to the Tribune-Star

The usual slow pattern of frontier settlement in the United States was very different from the speed of the California gold rush. About 100,000 people poured into the new territory in the first two years after the gold discovery.

Almost all of these new settlers were men, while on the former frontiers the whole family moved to the new lands. During the first year, women were seldom seen in California. For the most part, the Forty Niners were young and unmarried. The married men left their wives at home.

They came to the west coast, not to settle, but to dig enough gold to pay off the mortgage on the family farm, or to buy a new farm, or to start out in business for themselves.

Unlike the average American pioneer, most of the gold seekers had no intention of remaining in California longer than the few months they estimated they would need to make their "piles."

A few were able to do this, but many returned home no richer than when they started. Some sent for their families and remained in California.

There were to be other gold rushes in the years that followed — to Pike's Peak in 1859, to Montana in the 1860s, and to the Klondike in the 1890s. But the California gold rush was the first and greatest of them all, and set the pattern for the miner's frontier.

Communication in those days was so slow that word of the gold strike in the far west was not heard of here in the Wabash Valley until almost a year later. It was another year before the first of the lucky ones returned home with their little bags of gold. Word of mouth soon spread the news, and the immense overland trek to the gold fields began.

Dr. Septer Patrick announced his intention of leaving April 1 in the Wabash Courier of Jan. 20, 1849. He asked that patients owing him money should settle their accounts with him.

On March 10, the Courier noted the departure of Capt. W.W. Stuart, L.A. Booth, T.M. Lindley, M.D. Topping, W.R. Stewart, J. Blackburn and E. Dennison. This group traveled by boat to New Orleans and on by the water route to California.

According to the newspaper account of April 7, "Septer Patrick left on horseback with two wagons, one four-horse, the other one-horse, by way of St. Joseph, Mo. He was accompanied by his son, Henry Clary Patrick, Joseph Baker and a Mr. Paine."

Members of the Terre Haute Common Council drew up a lengthy resolution concerning Dr. Patrick's leaving, this valued citizen for nearly 30 years, and wished him well.

Exactly one month later, on May 7, Dr. Patrick arrived in St. Joseph. Traveling with him were Chamberlain, Ketchum, Hook, Crawford and others from Terre Haute, and Darwin and York, Ill. He reported to his wife in a letter that some 5,000 men were there and more coming.

On May 13, Dr. Patrick reported that "our friends from Vigo have nearly all left. Chamberlain, Dr. Ketchum, Barbour, Crawford and Hook are still here, and are going through on pack mules. We will stick to our wagons."

He arrived in California on Oct. 10 with his son, Clay, and the other members of the party, the teams and wagons, all in good health.

The Dec. 7 letter told of their pleasant trip across the plains, four months and 10 days from the Mississippi River to the Sacramento Valley. In taking the northern route, he had seen all of northern California as far south as Sacramento.

"None but good able-bodied men are fit for miners," Dr. Patrick explained. "We have to live on bread, pork and beef, without vegetables. I have never tasted even a potato since I left the states. Beans and rice we can get plenty at 10 cents per pound, but potatoes, onions, pickles and fruit cost from 50 cents to $1 a pound. Corn, wheat and barley, 15 to 20 cents a pound."

He advised every man crossing the Missouri to have provisioned his wagon with 100 pounds of bacon, 100 pounds of flour, 50 pounds hard bread or crackers, 35 pounds sugar, 20 pounds coffee, a little rice, cornmeal, beans, vinegar, salt and a small quantity of good brandy.

Patrick explained that a man should bring only woolen clothing, because the sun shone very hot in the middle of the day, but the air was cool and frosted every night on the journey. A flannel shirt was the most comfortable and healthy thing a man could wear. He advised bringing good woolen blankets, one good rifle for each wagon, and "leave your women and children at home .—.—. this is no place for them."

The Courier quoted a letter from Caleb Gartrell. He and others who left Terre Haute in the spring of 1850 were at Fort Laramie on June 9. Dr. Parsons, Hussey, Casto and a few others from this town passed through there earlier in June. Traveling with him were J. Thirlwell, J. Bell, F. Long, William Collar, C. Beard and others.

The first man to return from the gold fields was Richard Scouten, according to a news item in the Courier on March 30, 1850.

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Note: This writer would be interested in hearing from anyone who has diaries or letters of any of those brave 49ers from the Wabash Valley.

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Community Affairs File

No sale: Buck, Ben, Tom or Jerry

After the gold: Whatever happened to J.L. Moss?

Ts MAR 17 1991

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In 1848 the news of the discovery of gold in California triggered off the first gold rush in the history of the world. By 1850 almost 100,000 people poured into the new territory. Almost all these new settlers were men.

Most of the Forty-Niners were young and unmarried, or had left wife and family at home. Most of these adventurers had no intention of staying in California longer than the few months in which they planned to make their "pile."

They expected to dig enough gold to pay off the mortgage on the farm at home, or to buy a new farm, or to start a business for themselves, etc. Few were able to do this, and many returned home no wealthier than when they started.

In the years that followed, there were to be other gold rushes: to Pike's Peak in 1859, to Montana in the 1860s, and to the Klondike in the 1890s.

Many times a group of men from one locality would band together and pool their resources to pay for tools, supplies and transportation to hunt for gold in the "Far West."

Even on the well-traveled trails there were many hardships, and the routes were soon marked by broken wagons, dead oxen and mules, and lonely graves.

The stories that came out of California as to the richness of the gold deposits were usually exaggerations. There were no nuggets lying around like hen's eggs waiting to be picked up, and no streams paved with gold.

Most of the men who came to look for wealth would have earned more staying on the farm back home. But strikes were sometimes made that were almost as remarkable as the stories told back East.

An interesting document was found among the family papers of John Beauchamp. Dated March 1, 1849, this yellowed paper told of the farm auction of J.L. Moss, Versailles, Ky., John's ancestor. Moss had sold his farm and left by ox team for California and Oregon Territory.

All his personal property was listed for sale in this manner: "All my ox teams, except two teams Buck and Ben and Tom and Jerry which I will drive west . . . two milk cows . . . two oxen yokes . . . two ox carts . . . plow with wooden mould board . . . 1,500 ten-foot fence rails . . . 85 sugar troughs made of white ash timber . . . two spinning wheels . . . one large loom, made by Jerry Wilson, and 100 split hoops . . . "

The list continued: "one 32-gal. barrel of Johnson Miller whiskey, seven years old . . . 20 gal. apple brandy . . . some oak-tanned leather . . . one doz. wooden pitch forks . . . one .32-caliber rifle made by Benjamin Miller . . . several hams, sides of bacon and 10-gal. lard . . . six fox hounds, all soft-mouthed except one . . . one gray mare and colt . . . one baby yoke . . . lot of poplar weather boards . . . 800 to 1,000 ft. of clapboards . . . one 60-gal. soap kettle . . . 10-gal. maple syrup . . . 40 gal. sorghum molasses . . . 20 lbs. mutton tallow . . . 300 poles . . . 100 empty barrels . . . one 40-gal. copper still . . . 50-gal. soft soap . . . three scythes and cradles . . . one-half interest in tanyard."

At the same time Moss offered to "sell my six Negro slaves, two men (39 and 58 years old), two boys (12 and 18 years old), two Mulatto wenches (32 and 40 year olds) — will sell all together to same person as I will not separate them."

Terms of the sale were "cash in hand, or note to draw four percent interest with Henry McConnell as security." The sale was to start at eight o'clock, "with plenty of free eats and drinks all during the sale."

As interesting as old family papers are, they can also be very frustrating. The question comes to mind, after the sale did this Mr. Moss make it safely to the Far West? Did he strike it rich? Did he stay there, or did he return to Kentucky or Indiana where his descendants were to live their lives?

Nearly every family has some one who left the family root tree, so to speak, and journeyed off to the gold rushes, to seek greener pastures, or just to see the country.

Some returned, some didn't, and that's what makes genealogy such a difficult task in locating these little-known branches of the family tree.

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